

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended): A process for producing solubilized keratin, which comprises:

hydrolyzing in an aqueous- or aqueous-alcohol-alkali solution not containing a reducing agent a keratin raw material having a water content ranging from 20 to 80% by weight to produce a hydrolyzate liquid containing solubilized keratin,

neutralizing the hydrolyzate liquid containing solubilized keratin, and

extracting a solubilized keratin from the supernatant that has an average molecular weight of 8,000 to 13,000 Da (as determined by a gel filtration method).

2. (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the keratin raw material is cleaned with water, an organic solvent and/or a detergent prior to hydrolyzing it.

3. (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein an alkali concentration in said aqueous- or aqueous-alcohol-alkali solution is 0.1 to 0.5 mol/L.

4. (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the hydrolyzing occurs for 0.1 to 16 hours at a temperature ranging from 80 to 120°C.

5. (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, further comprising neutralizing the keratin raw material with peroxide.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the keratin raw material comprises feathers.

8. (Currently Amended): A solubilized feather keratin having an average molecular weight of 8,000 to 13,000 Da (as determined by a gel filtration method) and manufactured by a process which comprises:

hydrolyzing in an aqueous- or aqueous-alcohol-alkali solution not containing a reducing agent a keratin raw material comprising feathers having a water content ranging from 20 to 80% by weight,

neutralizing the hydrolyzate liquid containing solubilized keratin, and
extracting a solubilized keratin from the supernatant.

9. (Previously Presented): A composition comprising:
a solubilized keratin manufactured from feathers by the process according to claim 1
and

at least one other cosmetic ingredient,
wherein said composition is in a form suitable for use as a cosmetic.

10. – 19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended): A process for producing a keratin hydrolysate, which comprises:

providing hydrated feathers, as a keratin raw material, having a hydrous state where the feathers contain 20% to 80% water content, and

hydrolysing the hydrated feathers in an aqueous- or aqueous-alcohol-alkali solution that does not contain a reducing agent to produce a hydrolysate liquid;

wherein said keratin hydrolysate has an average molecular weight ranging from 8,000 to 13,000 Da (as determined by a gel filtration method).

21. (Previously Presented): The process of claim 20, further comprising:
neutralizing the hydrolysate liquid, and
extracting a soluble keratin from the neutralized hydrolysate liquid.

22. (Previously Presented): The process of claim 20, wherein said keratin hydrolysate has an average molecular weight ranging from 9,000 to 12,000 Da (as determined by a gel filtration method).

23. (Previously Presented): The process of claim 20, further comprising producing the hydrated feathers by immersing feathers in water, and then dehydrating the feathers until they reach a hydrous state where the feathers contain 20% to 80% water.

24. (Currently Amended): The process of claim 20, wherein the aqueous- or aqueous-alcohol-alkali solution contains 0.1 to 0.8 mol/L of sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, calcium hydroxide, or ammonia.

25 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 20, further comprising neutralizing the hydrolysate liquid with acid and/or peroxide.

26. – 29. (Cancelled)

30. (New): The process of claim 1, wherein said neutralizing is done with an acid and not with a peroxide.

31. (New): A process for producing solubilized keratin, which comprises:
hydrolyzing a keratin raw material having a water content ranging from 20 to 80% by weight in an aqueous- or aqueous-alcohol-alkali solution consisting essentially of water and 0.1 to 0.8 m/L of an alkali to produce a hydrolyzate liquid containing solubilized keratin,
neutralizing the hydrolyzate liquid containing solubilized keratin, and
extracting a solubilized keratin from the supernatant that has an average molecular weight of 8,000 to 13,000 Da (as determined by a gel filtration method).

32. (New): The process of claim 31, wherein said alkali is sodium hydroxide.

33. (New): The process of claim 31, wherein said alkali is potassium hydroxide, calcium hydroxide or ammonia.

34. (New): A solublized keratin produced by the process of claim 31.